

## I found my

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## I found my

by [Yikes \(Mr\\_CoralFlower\)](#)

### Summary

Dream is great at avoiding his feelings. He has so much practice.

[Dream's POV of *dream hidden in your heart*]

### Notes

this is a companion work to my other dreamnotfound fic. the titles r meant to be read together which is why this fic doesnt have a real summary, so when i update these one after the other itll be easy for ppl to draw the connection.

## **What If We Kissed (In Minecraft)**

A lot of what Dream feels, if he's honest, is anger. And he doesn't know what to do with any of it.

He jokes around a lot. That's something. It takes the edge off.

He likes to give gifts. It makes him feel like he has something he doesn't. Which is why--

He sees the rosebush and his heart leaps.

"I have something for you, George," he says. "I don't have it, but I'm gonna get it real quick, I see it."

He puts it in George's inventory and waits with bated breath for George's response.

"Okay, wow, thank you."

# And We Were Both Boys

## Chapter Notes

ok soooo a few things, lets see

the plugin bit is realistic i promise. coders are just Like That

i got ADHD vibes from a q&a video dream made so im writing him with ADHD in this. deal with it

all the other youtubers mentioned in this chapter r fictional but pls let me know if i accidentally made up someones real youtube name so i can change it

btw this is... basically my first time writing dream from his own pov and honestly idk how good it is so..chbcbc dont roast me too hard pls uwu

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream is a little bit of a mess. He knows this. Most of the time, he's comfortable with it. He's made peace with the weird wavelength his brain runs on.

But right now?

Right now, his whole life is a mess, not just his head, and it's a little bit unbearable.

More to the point, it's his own fault.

Okay, not his whole life. That was maybe a bit of an exaggeration. His YouTube career is going great!

No, it's Dream's love life that's the problem. Or really, all his personal relationships, romantic or otherwise. He has a beautiful girlfriend and a great squad he plays minecraft with and everything is terrible and it's all Dream's fault.

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He loves his girlfriend very much. That's part of the problem. Dream is a fuck up, because he can't control how he feels about people and he loves his girlfriend even though she cheated once and might do it again-- but they've talked about it. They've talked, and he wants to trust her, so he does.

Warning signs are so easy to ignore. Dream would know. He does it all the time.

.

*once a cheater always a cheater*

*unless it's a minecraft cheater, sometimes those grow up : )*

.

He doesn't want to talk about it.

"Hey everyone, how are you guys doing?"

A chorus of answers from Dream's computer.

"Wow, don't all talk at once," George says. "That's rude. Dream, I still don't get it, is this supposed to be a Q&A?"

"No," Dream says. "Just a fun voice call, that's it. What's everyone's favorite block?"

Everyone tries to answer at once again, but one voice stands out from the cacaphony:

"Acacia planks!!!"

Whoever said it was loud enough to talk over everyone else. Dream chuckles, rolling his eyes, as someone else says,

"What? No, fuck acacia, acacia sucks."

"I agree, acacia isn't great," George says, and Dream starts laughing.

"You guys, who cares? Wood is wood!" he says.

"It's about the aesthetics!" FeralBuilds insists. "Acacia wood just *looks* bad!"

"No, are you kidding me? Acacia is the best wood in the game, it's so warm and pretty," Dipstick retorts.

"Personally, I think acacia is mid tier," says craftwithharry, and Dream keeps on laughing at them, because seriously, they're arguing about *minecraft wood*, that's the stupidest thing ever. "Jungle wood gang."

"Jungle planks are just budget acacia!" Dipstick says. "Jungle planks look like a menstruating baboon sat on your bench and you tried to rinse the blood off but it stained."

"Gross," George comments.

"Exactly!" Dipstick says, and Dream is wheezing, he's forgotten what it's like to have air in his lungs.

"You take that back," says FeralBuilds. "Acacia looks like how drinking orange juice after brushing your teeth tastes. Jungle has panache, it's actually subtle--"

"Acacia is the incel of minecraft," RoryGames puts in. "Birch is best wood."

"Okay, okay, enough," Dream struggles to say through his laughter. "No more wood discussion--"

"Spruce is life!" says AngelicaSky, and Dream bursts out laughing again as the argument starts back up. He gives up on speaking and sends a message to George.

*dude pls make them stop*

"You guys, stop, this isn't even funny anymore--"

"What's your favourite wood, George?" says AngelicaSky. George stutters, and betrays Dream.

"I-- I mean, dark oak, obviously, but--"

"Budget spruce!" Angelica says, and Dream hears George sputtering and puts his head in his hands. This is never going to end.

.

But eventually it does. The conversation lulls around lunchtime as people start taking breaks, and at one point it's just George, Dream, and Harry of craftwithharry.

"I actually really like you guys's videos," Harry says. "You've gotten really good at the editing, so that every moment is something I actually wanna see, it's pretty awesome."

"Thanks," George says, and Dream smiles at his screen.

"Yeah? So would you call yourself a fan?"

"I'm in your merch discord, aren't I?" Harry says. Dream chuckles, delighted at the snark, and says,

"I mean, I don't know, maybe you came here to network. Who knows! I have a super important question, though, dude."

"Okay, shoot," Harry says.

"Are you one of those shippers?"

Dream hears George choke.

"I don't ship real people to their faces."

And that means yes. Dream grits his teeth, forces a smile, and interrupts Harry.

"But it's funny, I'm not uncomfortable with it, I just think it's--"

"Yeah, I've heard you say that before," says Harry. Dream decides he's tired of the topic and right clicks Harry's username, hovering over the Kick button. "People have shown me stream clips. But I haven't heard much about it from George other than him consistently telling you to stop when you joke about it."

Huh. Dream frowns, considering that, and moves his mouse to the leave call button. George would have said something about it if he didn't like it.

Right?

"George thinks it's funny too, right George?"

George takes a moment to respond and Dream's stomach does a backflip and throws itself off a cliff.

"I mean, yeah. It's--"

"Are you uncomfortable with it?" Harry interrupts, and Dream moves his mouse back to the kick button, because seriously, what business does this guy have butting into it?

But then George makes a sound like the ones he made when Dream made him say he loved him, and Dream hesitates, finger on the button, heart in his throat, waiting for George's response.

"A little." Dream's stomach lands in lava at the bottom of the cliff. "It doesn't matter, it's--"

"There's no minimum amount of discomfort you have to feel to ask people to stop, you know," says Harry, and Dream sneers, thinking the guy sounds like some kind of PSA, or something. Obnoxious. There's... actually an alarming amount of anger bubbling subtly in Dream's heart right now. Like his entire abdominal cavity has been pumped full of it, noxious and fuming.

"It's just a stupid joke," he snaps, and then hesitates, taken aback by the sound of his own voice. It's not a huge difference, he doesn't even know if anyone else will notice, but to him it's a lot. He sounds really harsh. He tries again. "It's really not that serious--"

"Relationships aren't some stupid joke, Dream," George says, and Dream swallows, feeling like he's gulping down acid, like his anger wants to dissolve him and let him drip onto everything he cares about so it's all just ruined. "It's--"

"I know," Dream says. He feels far away all of a sudden, the way he felt when he found out Sam was-- that Sam had been-- that the whole time, she--

"I'm back, what did I miss?" says AngelicaSky, and Dream chuckles like a hydra spitting poison and says,

"Nothing much. Just an in-depth philosophical discussion about the ethics of parasocial relationships and transformative work."

Angelica snorts, and Dream takes deep breaths, trying to feel normal again, as the conversation moves on around him.

.

He makes some excuse to hang up pretty soon after that. George stays in the call, which is honestly a relief, because it means Dream doesn't have to face him yet.

Everything sucks. And it's all Dream's fault. Was George-- has George been-- the whole time, was he uncomfortable with it?

Dream never even thought of that, not really. He just-- he made it a joke because he didn't know what else to do with it. Or-- he knew what else, but that was... not acceptable. That was not an option. So he *had* to laugh at it.

He's getting antsy thinking about it, so he plays with his cat for a few hours and lets the worry sit in the background for a little while.

And then he calls George.

.

"Hey, can we maybe talk about earlier?"

"Hello to you too, Dream, I'm doing great, thanks for asking."

Dream makes a noise that's half laugh, half something else. He's so, so nervous, he's clenching his teeth and everything, and he knows he's probably just blown this out of proportion in his head the way he does with everything, but it feels so fucking intense.

"No, seriously, can we talk about it?"

Please, please just answer the question, please don't evade.

"What is there to talk about?"

Dream breathes a sigh of relief.

"Have I been creeping you out this whole time? Like, by bringing it up? And acting like- well, you know."

George doesn't answer for a moment and Dream holds his breath.

"I mean, not-- it's not that, it doesn't creep me out. I don't know. I can't really explain why I don't like it, I just don't."

Relief and horror mix like honey and tide pods in a blender (mmm smoothie!), and Dream allows himself to breathe again.

"Do you want me to stop mentioning it?"

"Just stop encouraging them," George says. "I don't like it, it's weird--"

Hm. Phrasing. Dream needs that clarified. It's compulsive; he can't *not* ask.

"Just stop encouraging them? So, what, if I wanna still give you flowers in minecraft when we play without recording it I can do that cus no one is watching? Or do you mean stop completely?"

"Why would you want to give me flowers in minecraft in the first place, Dream?"

"Cus I can't give you them in real life, duh."

Dream is very careful never to think before he speaks. It's bad for his heart.

"Stop joking around."

Dream frowns. Did he use his joke voice by mistake or something? Did he laugh without realising it?

"I'm not joking around! I'm asking--"

"Well excuse me if I'm skeptical that the same shit you always say is a joke when the camera is rolling suddenly isn't a joke anymore. Maybe you shouldn't have screwed around so much if you want me to take you seriously now."

Oh. Oh, okay. Dream swallows, feeling suddenly like utter shit again, and says,

"Will you answer the question? Can I give you flowers when we play minecraft alone or not?"

"If you really want to, I don't care," George says.

Dream takes a deep breath, and shoves his anxiety far away.

"Do you wanna play some minecraft?" he says.

"Oh, my god, you cannot be serious."

"Geooooorge--"

"Fine, I'll play some stupid minecraft with your stupid ass."

Success!

Now Dream just needs to figure out some way to fix everything he ruined.

.

So he codes a plugin. It's really crappily made, but all it does is give him an additional interface in the anvil so he can drop a stack of things in and specify multiple names at once, and then rename all of them in one click. That takes about twenty minutes and it'll probably be broken in at least 50 separate ways, but Dream doesn't need it to work well, he just needs it to work.

Dream is tired at this point of having feelings, so he lets them float away as he starts drafting what he's gonna say. All his emotions seem to be doing lately is getting in the way.

He gets the message exactly how he wants it, 36 words, perfect, but then he realises he doesn't have any flowers on him. He hits ctrl A to select the whole thing so he can copy it, but it doesn't work. That's his shitty rush job rearing its ugly head. Great. He presses escape and goes to find some roses.

His apology isn't as good the second time, but he's too tired to try and remember exactly what he wrote the first time. He just clicks the Go button.

36 roses fly out of the anvil, the way things used to do when you left them in a crafting table and pressed E, and Dream heaves a sigh and goes to pick them up.

They're out of order, and the duplicate words are stacked together. He spends another two minutes shuffling them around, and then runs a command to switch his inventory with George's. He'll switch it back as soon as George gets the message.

"Ugh!" Hehe. "Oh my god, Dream, where's my stuff-- Why aren't these stacking?"

"Don't mix them up!" Dream says, a little bit horrified at the thought of George putting them all out of order again. "You have to read the message first."

"What."

Dream takes deep breaths and hopes his stomach will stop feeling funny. It already got burnt up by lava in the similes, so it should be gone now, right? It shouldn't be bouncing up and down like a child on a pogo stick.

"Okay, whatever," George says dismissively, and Dream freezes. The child falls off the pogo stick and skins his knee on the asphalt.

"I mean it," Dream says, like he's pleading, and George doesn't seem impressed.

"I have to go to bed, I'm really tired."

Dream opens his mouth to the sound of Discord's *call ended* chime, and his shoulders slump. George disconnects from the server.

Fuck.

Dream sort of wants to throw something.



## Chapter End Notes

commentttt

(acacia gang rise up)

# Haha, Just Kidding!

## Chapter Notes

(this chapter was deleted and reposted cus ao3 wasnt moving the fic to the top of the ship tag or to the top of my works list and it made me freak out. it still isnt at the top of the ship tag the way it should be, but its at the top of my works page now so i am just going to wait for support to fix it even though its driving me nuts rn)

this chapter did not wanna be written, but i made it happen somehow. every single sentence fought me, which was kinda annoying since i LITERALLY outlined this one in my head while i was writing george's pov of all of it, but honestly i think the struggle was worth it. i was insecure abt last chapter but i think ive started figuring out how i wanna write this dude lol

when you read george's pov of ch 3 it looks like a bunch of scenes in no particular order with only a few connecting themes

when you read this... well, youll see :)

btw i made an allusion to the Mysterious Benedict Society in this chapter so dont get caught too off guard by that uwu. i tried googling the details i mentioned but im afraid you may not be able to fully understand unless you read the entire very good book, sorry :D

btw the reason i call him dream in narration and not clay is essentially a courtesy in case he ever sees this. i wouldnt know from experience but hopefully thatll make it less creepy lol

idk if anyones noticed yet (and it wont be too relevant until next chapter) but a huge theme of these fics is like. the effects of rpf ships on the real ppl in question so buckle in. ive raised the chapter count. if george's is still at 3/4 it just means i was lazy

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The next morning, things don't look quite as terrible. Dream's anger has drained away and left him corroded like exposed electrical wiring in the middle of the everglades, but now he can think easier. He realises George just said to *stop encouraging them*, meaning his main issue is with the shippers, and not with Dream. Or rather, his main issue with Dream is more about the shippers and less about Dream as a person. It's his actions that have caused the problems, not his personality, so he just has to pick better actions going forward.

The thing is--

The thing is that Dream is a coward. Or he feels like one as he slips a cornflower into George's trash chest instead of actually giving it to him.

He also puts a dandelion in a different chest the next day, and then gets fed up with himself for being so indirect. This is stupid.

.

It takes him a few days to find the flower forest biome, but it's well worth it when he does. Allium all over the place.

There's also a neat little waterfall, and Dream has never been much of a builder, but he can just picture a house on stilts above the rushing water as it runs down the hillside. That would be so cute.

But it's not what he's here for. He gathers up a bunch of Allium and puts one in a pot outside George's door.

.

Dream looks up flowers on the minecraft wiki, because after being obvious last time, he's decided that was too nerve-wracking. He needs some other reason, some way to explain it.

There's dye, that should work, since George always dyes his helmets when they play.

Compost is a fun idea too. There's compost bins in villages, so it should be easy enough to make it happen. Dream considers doing something with suspicious stew, but he decides that'd be too complicated. Alright. Dye and compost.

.

Dream sees his opportunity while they're recording. That's okay, though. He just won't include this when he's editing.

He gives George a flower to dye his helmet with. Blue like the sky.

.

They find a village in their survival world, and Dream decides on lilacs because real life lilacs smell lovely, and compost is stinky, so he kind of thinks it's funny.

*/give Dream lilac*

It only gives him one lilac, and he sighs. He's always forgetting to specify half the arguments in his commands.

*/give Dream lilac 64*

There. Much better.

"Hey George, I have something for you."

"What is it?"

"A job. Will you compost these for me?" Dream throws the lilacs at George. "Aaaand, one more for you to keep!"

What? It's not like he's gonna leave the extra lilac in his inventory to clutter things up.

George makes a scoffing sound, but he picks the flowers up, so Dream decides everything is going well.

"You can't compost flowers, Dream."

"Yeah you can, I checked the wiki, George."

"No you can't," George says, and Dream rolls his eyes. "I thought it was supposed to be food only?"

"Nope," Dream says. "Flowers are actually better than seeds."

"Right, watch it not work," George says, and Dream laughs as he runs over to a compost bin. "Oh."

Dream laughs harder, because George sounds so taken aback that he just can't help it.

"I told you," he says. George hits him with a lilac and he starts wheezing as George composts the flowers. It's such a small thing, but honestly, the fact that George was so confident when he said it wouldn't work is hilarious to Dream. Especially since he kept insisting even after Dream told him he checked the wiki.

"Where'd you even get all these?" George says, and Dream bites his lip. Maybe he shouldn't have just followed his first impulse to spawn them in. Maybe he should've just collected flowers the regular way.

"Around," he says shiftily.

"Did you spawn them in?" George asks.

"Maybe."

Dream hears him scoff, and raises his shield as George goes to hit him again.

"Cheater."

*Once a cheater, always--* nope, not thinking about that.

"Don't be like that, George, I would never cheat on you," he says lightheartedly. They aren't recording, so he figures it's fine.

George doesn't object to the joke.

"That's the whole stack, Dream," he just says, and-- okay, wow, now Dream has to go put all this bone meal somewhere, great.

George composts another lilac, and Dream's breath gets stuck in his throat for a second. It makes sense, though. He didn't actually expect George to keep it. Inventory space is valuable.

.

"Hey, George," Dream says, splitting up stacks in his inventory. He has ten beef, twenty bread, and six mutton.

"What?"

"Check the chest by the entrance to your cave when you're done, I left some food in there for you."

"Okay," George says.

Dream places a crafting table so he can make a chest, and then he makes the ten block walk to the cave George is in and puts the chest down.

He gives George all the beef because he's feeling generous, splits the mutton evenly, and keeps most of the bread. He debates cleaning out his inventory in this chest, because he's got a lot of extra crap, but he ends up just putting a poppy in. He'll find some lava for the other stuff later, or maybe a cactus or something.

.

Food gathering time. Dream kills a few cows and then gets bored. Four beef split between the two of them isn't much, but Dream decides he can make it work. He's tired of lighting animals on fire, it's just such a chore. They always scatter, and then he has to chase after them, and it just sucks.

"Oh George, by the way," he says, running up to George and shifting. George turns around with his axe out. "I have something for you!"

"Dream, I swear to god--"

Dream tosses him three steak, and then-- George hits him.

"What was that for," he says.

"This isn't enough steak, you only gave me three!" George says, and Dream sighs. He knew George would have a problem with his lax attitude towards food collection, but *honestly*.

"I only kept two," he says, because he knows if he says he kept one, George will try and give one back, and that's just awkward.

"Okay, I guess that's fine then."

.

Things still aren't right again. Sure, maybe they're interacting and having fun the same as always, but Dream doesn't feel the same and he doesn't know how to fix it.

Because George doesn't seem to get it. Dream tries giving him shit all the time and George never takes it as the gesture of friendship or whatever that it's truly supposed to be.

Dream looks up friendship advice and ends up on Wikipedia, clicking link after link after link until he's utterly distracted from his original purpose. He reads an article about love languages, though. Some guy thinks there's five main ways people show love, but not everyone interprets every single thing as an expression of love, so that's why misunderstanding happens. Dream looks at the list and things start to make sense. There's gift giving, physical touch, acts of service, quality time, and words of affirmation.

Gift giving probably just isn't George's thing. That's okay. He'll just have to try something else.

Dream isn't too hung up over the fact that the whole theory is about romantic relationships, because he knows there's love in friendship too.

.

"Hey George, what's your love language?" he asks.

"Java," George says, and Dream bursts out laughing. He's a little annoyed that George didn't give him a straight answer, but if he pushes it, that might be weird. So he doesn't. He decides to just try and figure it out.

What's the most likely possibility?

"Acts of service" is the other thing on the list that makes sense to Dream, so he decides he'll try that next.

.

Later that day, they go exploring together. Dream has already been out this way, but he doesn't say anything because that was a week ago and he's already forgotten all the details. Besides, he didn't do anything significant or loot any villages, so it's not like going this way again is really a waste of energy.

Also, well, George is having a good time.

They come to the flower forest where Dream got the allium. He almost expects George to say something, to call him out on already exploring in this direction, but George doesn't seem to notice.

Dream remembers that most people don't bother memorising which specific biome every single flower comes from. Which kind of makes him feel even sillier for expecting the allium to mean anything to George. Of course he didn't think much of it; he had no idea that Dream had to find a specific, rare biome to get it.

Dream stumbles across the little waterfall again, and the mental image of the house on stilts comes back even stronger. He blinks, sort of disconcerted, and says,

"Hey, check out this waterfall."

What he really means is *can't you see what we could build here? can you picture what we would make together?*

George pauses for a moment and says, "Okay, cool."

He moves on quickly, but Dream lingers for a moment, looking at the flowers and the water and the absence of a house.

There's nothing there. No use throwing a tantrum about it.

And besides, isn't it funny? A house on stilts. Ridiculous. Dream has to laugh.

.

A house on stilts. Dream can't sleep. Irony, considering the name he picked out. The waterfall, and perched on stilts above it, a house. He can see it in his mind every time he shuts his eyes, and for some reason, the image distresses him. It makes him feel restless, like he should be getting something out of it, but he can't figure out why, because there's nothing there, and there never will be. Dream should just stop trying.

He should just be satisfied with what is there. Just because there's no house doesn't mean there's nothing. There's flowers, and grass, and a waterfall that runs down the hill to join the river. There's a sheep or two. There's a single block of exposed coal ore in the cliff face across the water. There's so much there already, but still he wants to build a house. It's like he has all the materials already gathered, and he knows he's got the exact right amount of every block, and he just wants to start, but he can't, because there is nothing there, and there never will be. He couldn't live in the house even if he did build it. The flower forest is 4000 blocks away from their base. Moving everything over would take ages, and there's not even enough space in that forest for a base the same size as

the one they already have.

It just isn't possible. There's no point getting mad about it.

Dream forces a chuckle and sits up. He can't stand to think about that stupid house on stilts any longer. He needs to get his mind off of it.

Acts of service. Right. Dream is a little bit delirious, but he remembers his plan. He decides it's time to go mining.

.

The next day, George asks about the iron, but Dream isn't paying enough attention to notice whether it means anything to him. He's way too tired.

So he'll have to test it again. Ugh. Dream sucks at chores. That's part of why the whole "acts of service" thing seems like an especially obvious way to demonstrate that you care about someone. Doing something you hate so someone else won't have to is just about the most considerate thing Dream can think of.

.

"You can blow the houses up if you want," Dream says. He tosses George the TNT and crafts a button real quick to give to him as well. "And I can get us more food."

"You just want me to blow myself up," George says, and Dream rolls his eyes at the dramatics.

"What? No, it's the fun job. Just make sure you use the button to light it or the iron golem will get mad at you."

"Why haven't we killed that thing, anyway."

"I dunno," Dream says. He heaves a sigh and sets off into the plains to find some cows.

.

"Do you ever think about, like, what it would be like if we lived closer together?" Dream says while waiting for more blazes to spawn. Then he blinks, frowns, and mentally replays what he just said, because he's forgotten. His mouth goes dry suddenly.

"What do you mean?"

Dream heaves a sigh.

"Like, if we lived in the same neighborhood, or something."

"No, why would I think about that," George says, and Dream swallows.

A house on stilts. Would George blow it up?

"Nevermind," he says. "Hey, how many blaze rods have you got?"

"Two," George says, and Dream swallows the confusion and anger because he doesn't know what else to do with them. Like Constance Contraire with the licorice.

.

Acts of service aren't working, so Dream picks his next attempt at random. Words of affirmation seem fun.

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"Hey everyone, in this challenge-- George, you explain it, you did the awesome coding this time."

Dream listens carefully to George's response.

"Right. So, in this one, anytime you place a block, you teleport right below it."

Hm, not much of a difference from usual.

"And does that include lava or water?" Dream asks. "What if there's no air underneath the block?"

"Well, you'll just have to try it and find out," George says mysteriously, and Dream laughs, excited.

"This is gonna be so weird," he says. "Let's goo!"

.

Dream decides to try again, but with more oomph. It works. He gets George so flustered he doesn't bother fighting off mobs after he's won, and finally, he starts feeling like he's doing something right.

And it isn't even hard. Everything he says comes naturally, because everything George did was impressive. He still gives him a flower, because he can't resist, but he knows it isn't the reason George has that amazing giddy tone to his voice with every word he says. George is happy about the compliments, and Dream feels great, like he's cracked some sort of code.

George leaves abruptly, and Dream is a little puzzled by it, but he doesn't let it kill his good mood. He sets about processing the footage with a fervour, watching his recording and taking note of every timestamp where something exciting happens. He was right; there are a lot of them.

.

Maybe it's better that George left in a hurry. It's suddenly 11 pm, and Dream has to get up early to go to work tomorrow. He's been editing for 5 hours without a break. He makes a mental note to message George tomorrow morning and remind him how cool he was tonight.

He barely has any trouble falling asleep.

## Chapter End Notes

i am vibrating with excitement. i hope i can write dream's pov of ch 4 fast enough to post tomorrow cus ive had george's written for a couple days and hooooo boy. oh man. ive seen yalls confused comments and i promise ch 4 is gonna make at least half of all the things make sense. >:) get ready for it. get ur hopes up as high as you want cus yolo and b careful what u wish for ùwú



## ...unless?

### Chapter Notes

this chapter is 43% of the total word count of this fic so far because dream just has so many freaking thoughts. its like, a full 1300 words longer than george's smh just take it. this morning i woke up and saw "found ch 4" in my google drive and went "oh thank fuck, what a relief, im glad i didnt leave the whole thing for today, im glad i started last night" and then i opened it and it was like five sentences.

so i honestly considered not updating this fic and just posting george's chapter 4 cus i was dreading copy and pasting all the dialogue into dream's chapter as i wrote, but then i remembered that i have a laptop, and i only write and post everything from my phone cus im lazy

i really wish i could stick an A/N into the middle of a fic but since i cant: i wrote nearly 5k words of this dipshit's POV and managed not to spoil this chapter the whole time, which i had already written george's POV of before i even started this fic. ughhhh it was SO HARD. pls compliment me lol. ill remind u in the end note

i was planning 2 tell yall you need to read george's pov of this chapter first cus i didnt think this one would be good but honestly do whatever order you want lol. keep in mind though that i wrote this with the assumption people would be reading george's first, and so like. i dont think the climax of the chapter will hit as hard if you read this pov first. for Reasons. this version is me showing every single card in my hand, while george's keeps the suspense up more.

this is 3400 words. im never doing that length again. from now on if i get past 2600 while doing dreams pov im stopping right there and not going any further no matter how many scenes remain. this is too long for a single chapter of a fic in this style.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Dream wakes up to his alarm in a perfect mood, which is such a rare occurrence that he's seriously confused about it at first. And then he remembers George.

He's feeling especially lighthearted today, so he decides it's probably fine if he thinks about George a little bit. He can't imagine getting mad right now, he doesn't think it would work even if he tried.

Specifically--

Dream wants so badly he kind of hates himself for it. But he's feeling too good right now for that, and all he thinks about is George, winning, grinning, wonderful.

He spends a lot of time not thinking about George, so it's nice to let go of the control and let it happen for once. Thinking about George just feels *nice*. And thinking about fixing things is not the same as thinking about George. Thinking about fixing things is research, and self-examination, and planning. Thinking about George is--

It's smiles, and ~~anger~~ yearning, and George's voice when he says Dream's name, and the way he

sounded last night. Thinking about George is just like thinking about Sam used to be. And thinking about George has always been that way, which is why he stopped doing it in the first place.

Maybe now he can start again. Maybe George wouldn't hate him.

Well, maybe. Dream has been doing too much of the not thinking lately, so he honestly isn't sure. But thinking about George is fun, and he wants to keep doing it.

George likes him. He must, or he wouldn't stick around. And Dream knows he likes George. Sometimes it hurts, looking back at his own actions and realising he really has no idea what he's doing. And sometimes it feels great. Like last night, when he knew what he was doing and did it well. He wants to do it some more.

So he opens up Discord and does it some more.

*good morning champion*

George responds pretty quickly, and that makes Dream smile.

*why are you up so early*

What? Early? It's not early in England, what is George talking about?

*isn't it eleven for you*

*yeah, and it's like 6 for you, what are you doing up?*

Oh. That's kind of sweet. Dream has already started out the morning by tearing down half his walls, and so his heart actually does melt at that. Hm. Maybe he needs to take a moment and get his feelings back under control again.

*are you gonna tell me good morning or not george*

*good morning Dream*

Oh! Yeah, there's no way these feelings are getting back under control anytime soon. Wow.

*aww, you capitalised my name. uwu*

*did you just uwu at me*

*gross*

*get out*

Dream laughs, and sends a pouty face.

:(

He clicks the call button. George joins, and says,

"What was up with last night?"

"You mean when you managed to kill me so often I was never past half iron while you kept gathering more and more resources the whole game? I think that was you being awesome."

"Oh my god, you're doing it again, stop."

"What, I can't compliment my- my minecraft best friend?"

Oopsie, that was close.

"You stuttered, Dream, what were you going to say?"

Oh, fuck.

"Nothing."

"No, tell me."

"It's nothing," Dream insists, trying to remember what exactly made him decide that it was a good time to be a little more honest with himself. Being honest with himself means he can't hide anything from anyone else either.

"Dream."

Dream sighs.

"Fine, I was gonna say champion, but I realised that was weird."

And George just says, "Oh."

"I'm still waking up, okay," Dream says, panicking a little. "Cut me some slack, like, sometimes I just say weird things and I don't even think about it. I say shit without thinking all the time. This time, I thought. It's really not a big deal, it doesn't mean anything, it's not--"

"Shut up, Dream."

Dream swallows, heart racing. He wants to hang up and hide, or throw his phone, or something, but he ends up just freezing in place, sat on the edge of his bed, phone on the nightstand.

"I'm sorry," he says. "I know it was weird, that's why I didn't say it in the first place. And you asked--"

"It's fine, I don't care about that," George says. "Why did you call me?"

"I dunno, I just wanted to talk to you."

"Oh," George says. "Did you want to talk about anything in particular, or...?"

Dream bites his lip, and tries to decide if he should make an excuse or not. George would probably see right through it, though. Better to just be honest.

"I mean, no, not really." Dream says. He wasn't embarrassed about not having a reason when he hit the call button, but he is embarrassed now. "Since when do I have to have a reason to talk to you? You're my friend, that's reason enough."

"Right..." George says. Dream chews on his lip and waits for him to say something else. "What's with the flowers, why do you keep on giving me flowers?"

The panic comes back. It's like the time a troupe of pillagers found his half-built house in his hardcore world when he only had leather armour and he didn't block off the door in time to keep them out (and it was night). His lungs feel tighter, and he wishes he could hit the pause button on real life to frantically google what to do, the way he did when the pillagers chased him up to his

unfinished second floor and almost shot him off the edge of it.

He should have put the whole house on stilts.

"I can stop, if you want," he says, struggling to keep his voice steady

"Tell me why, and I'll tell you if I want you to stop," George says. He doesn't sound amused. Dream's heart is racing.

"George, does it really matter why I--"

"It matters to me."

"Nevermind, it's-- I'll just stop, then it won't matter anymore--" Dream tries, but George interrupts him and Dream feels like his voicebox is getting all clogged up with words that won't work and words he shouldn't say and words he *can't* say because if he says them--

"Yes it will, because you'll still have done it last night and the day before and half a week ago and--"

"Okay, I get it, I get the picture, I give you flowers too often and it's uncomfortable," Dream says, cringing as he remembers George's non-reaction to that little waterfall. A house on stilts, toppling over. "I'll stop, George. You don't have to pretend it's not weird--"

"I don't care if it's weird," George says. "Why do you keep calling things weird, none of this was weird until you made it weird!"

Dream's eyes are wide. *None of this was weird until you made it weird.*

*You made it weird.*

He swallows the lump in his throat and blinks his eyes shut hard, trying to take deep breaths. He can't do this. He can't have this conversation. He needs to hang up, end the call, run away, but moving is beyond him right now and his phone is *on the nightstand* and there is nothing he can do. Everything is getting ruined, and it's all his fault.

Mangled flowers and broken glass sinking into the river. A waterfall littered with debris.

"George, I said I'd stop, can we just talk about something else?"

Pause button, pause button, where is the pause button? What can Dream say to put this on hold, what does he need to do, what is he doing *wrong*?

"You haven't told me why!" George snaps, and Dream flinches. "Why won't you just tell me, I didn't *ask* you to stop, I asked you *why*."

A skeletonised staircase on a hill, up to a porch with a door that leads to nowhere. There is nothing there except the sound of water rushing past the flowers, and there never could have been anything else.

"I won't tell you because you're my friend," Dream says, and George scoffs, and there is nothing, no waterfall, no river, no flowers, no forest. No friendship. No words Dream can say to make it stop.

"That's stupid, that doesn't make any sense, Dream--"

"--and I want you to keep being my friend, George. I don't want to mess everything up, okay? I shouldn't have messed with things in the first place, I shouldn't've tried to figure out if-- if-- it doesn't matter. I'll stop. You're my friend."

A ruined foundation, wooden posts snapped in half, stilted breath-- Dream needs to breathe, but he cannot do so discreetly, cannot breathe in without letting a sob out. He has some breath left, but it won't be enough, he can't--

"Is it because you like me?"

And everything is ruined. And nothing is okay. And all of it is Dream's fault as his breath enters his lungs like a gale of knives, burrowing through towards his heart.

"Do you like me, Dream?"

Dream swallows, and licks his lips.

"I-I like all my friends, that's why they're my friends, George," he says, and it's utterly unconvincing, he's basically just stalling at this point.

"Right," George says. "You know what I meant, Dream. Do you like me? Please just answer the question."

Fuck. Fuck, fuck, fuck. Dream squeezes his eyes shut and breathes in deeply.

"I'm sorry."

"Why are you apologising?"

It's hard to speak, but Dream owes him an answer. Owes him an explanation for everything.

"Because I-- George, I made it weird, everything is gonna be awkward now and it's all my fault. I just-- I should've just been satisfied with just talking to you and playing minecraft, believe me, if I could stop liking you, I would, but I haven't figured out how, so-- so I'm sorry."

"I can't believe this."

Dream's heart plummets. He's crying now, tears sliding easily and silently down his face like he's a fucking middle schooler again, like his hormones are going actively bonkers and he's still more child than adult. It's stupid. He shouldn't be crying.

"I'm sorry. I said I'll stop, George, I promise I'll stop. I just wanna forget about this, can we please? Can we pretend I didn't-- like--"

"Is this a joke?" George asks. Dream's breath gets stuck in his throat and it hurts, it hurts so badly. "Seriously, tell me the truth, I feel like I can't ever tell with you."

"It's never been a joke," Dream says. "Even when I said it was. Especially when I said it was. I'm sorry. George, seriously, I am so, so sorry."

George takes a while to respond, and that means Dream has ample time to wallow. He's so angry with himself, so disappointed with life for making things be this way. He just-- it's stupid, but he wants--

He doesn't want to be serious about it, he doesn't want to feel what he's feeling, he wants to start laughing again like he does when other people encourage it, but he can't. He's trying, and it isn't

working.

He hears George take a deep breath, and honestly considers hanging up.

"Why the hell didn't you just ask me out?" What? "You *idiot*. I thought you *knew*, I feel like I've been so *obvious* and this whole time I've felt like you were just-- using me to get the fangirls going so they'll buy more merch or whatever the fuck, and now you come out and tell me it was all real, the whole time? I wasn't just convenient to you? You-- you-- I thought, this whole time, that you just thought of Us Together as a joke! But you actually wanted it? Dream, what the hell is wrong with you? Why didn't you just say so?"

Dream blinks, confused. The tears are coming faster now. He feels small and stupid and worthless and-- and-- and George is talking like he likes Dream back. There's an impulse to check, but Dream squashes it viciously and shakes his head, because-- no. He won't ask. He can't. He's too afraid to.

"Well, part of it is because I wasn't single until recently," he says, pleased with the steadiness he's managing even though he's a mess right now. "You didn't say anything about it either."

"Because you made it excessively clear you didn't seriously want me!" George says, and Dream's mouth falls open. What? When did he ever do that? "I don't-- this is-- you're *ridiculous*, Dream. I'm seriously so mad at you right now."

"What the fuck are you talking about?" he asks, indignant, honestly sort of insulted. What has he been doing the entire past week? "When-- what?"

"*Oh, it's just a stupid joke, George,*" and his voice is harsh, sarcastic, edged with hysteria as he imitates Dream. And that's enough for Dream to get the picture, but before he can say anything, George keeps going:

"*Don't worry everyone, we both think it's hilarious that you want us to kiss! We don't even mind you saying it because it's so ridiculous we both know it'll never happen!* You seriously-- you really think-- *When*. Are you seriously asking me *when*?" Dream cannot breathe. "Always! You-- you've just been so *inconsiderate* of my feelings. What was your plan for if I actually liked you back? Did you even have one? Did you care that you'd be *hurting* me if that were the case?"

Dream has to stop breathing to calm down enough to form words.

"Of course I care," he says. It feels like he's speaking through a mouthful of frozen honey, thick and no longer runny, just sickly sweet and barely malleable anymore. Like he's choking on it. "I care, George, I promise."

"Then what were you *thinking*? Please, Dream. I-- I want to forgive you. I'm listening--"

*Sam, I promise I'm listening to you. Like, I'm worried about what I've heard, but I'm willing to give you a shot--*

*Don't be stupid, Clay, everyone knows cheaters don't change,* she had said, bitingly sarcastic, and Dream remembers rolling his eyes at that. Fuck, he was such an *idiot*.

*Everyone can change. Even if you cheated on the last guy you dated, that doesn't mean you'll do it again. I knew there were rumours about you when I asked you out the other day, Sam, you don't have to recite them to me. Did-- have people told you you'll never change?*

*Of course they have. Like, dude, really, sorry for leading you on, I only came here to let you know you don't want to deal with my reputation. Common courtesy and all that.*

*You're more than just a reputation, Sam. I'm serious, if you want to tell me your side, I'll listen. I want to trust you.*

And she looked at him with wide eyes, raised eyebrows, face full of beautiful surprise.

"--please just explain, I want you to have a reason, I want it to make sense."

Dream is horrified. It's like he's on the wrong side of the conversation, and it makes him feel so scummy. He wants to reassure George, but he doesn't want to take advantage of his trust, doesn't want to use him.

"I can't make it make sense," he admits. "I don't know what I was thinking. I was so confused, all the time, because I-- I've never lo-- liked a man before, and I also still loved Sam, and every time people said we seemed like a couple it just made me feel so-- I don't know, so... angry? That we weren't. Angry that we weren't. That I loved my girlfriend. That I liked you. That both were happening at the same time and I couldn't make either one stop. So I just turned it into a joke. Because I didn't want to show anyone how mad I was about all of it. Being mad just... wasn't an option I could live with. I didn't want people to think I hated the idea of being, you know, gay. I had to respond to the shipping somehow, since I knew if I just tried to ignore it, it wouldn't work, so I just-- I figured laughing was better than shouting."

He's never fully articulated any of it before.

"Oh," George says. He doesn't seem to have anything to say in response, so Dream starts talking again to fill the silence.

"I didn't want to yell at you," he says. "Every time someone said anything about shipping us, my first impulse was just to yell at you for not being with me. Someone would tweet *Dream and George seem like the kind of couple who would go bowling together and spend the whole time making fun of each other for not being very good at it* and I'd think *Why the hell can't I have that? It seems so good.*"

"Well, I hate to burst your bubble, but I'm actually pretty good at bowling," George says, and Dream smiles.

"Yeah, so am I, but-- you know what I mean, right? I just, I didn't know how to talk about it without being angry, and I didn't want to be mad at you because I--" don't say that yet-- "care about you."

He doesn't want to abuse George's trust, but at the same he wants so badly to be trusted, for George to understand and tell him it's okay. He just wants to be okay, he wants everything to be okay.

"I don't know, Dream, I'm still not-- I still don't feel like I can really trust this, it seems too sudden, I need time to think."

It's like a stone settles in Dream's throat, or a filter, stopping him up and keeping him restrained.

"Of course," he says, feeling far away, like he's on the other side of a chasm from the microphone. Like everything is coming to him through a wire, like he isn't literally right here, right by his phone, right by George-- oh.

He suddenly feels the distance between them. It's a gaping, bottomless canyon where a river used to be, and a waterfall pitches itself off the side to disperse in the heavy air and never touch the ground again. Somewhere down there, falling forever, there is shattered glass, and torn up flowers, and an entire staircase that's lost its purpose and meaning along with its connections, and a

doorframe with broken hinges still attached, a door with a crack in the middle from the force of the explosion, and across the gap, he can see a hole in the cliffside where George has mined that coal. Taking what he needs, and moving on.

"That's no problem--"

it hurts it hurts it *hurts*--

"I won't push you, just-- just set whatever boundaries you need and I'll follow them. Whether it's flowers or flirting or--"

no no no--

"or playing together. Whatever you need me to stop doing."

"I don't know," George says. "I don't know what I need, Dream. Can we talk about it later?"

And of course now they get to put it on pause. Now that everything's broken and ruined. Not before, of course, because that would have been too kind, too easy. The stone in Dream's throat seems to get bigger, and he doesn't say any of the bitter things he's feeling.

"Sure," he says instead. And then, because he's selfish and cold and afraid, "Are we still friends?"

"Yeah. Yeah, we're still friends."

A light on the other side of the canyon.

"Okay. I'm glad," Dream says, and that, at least, is honest. "Just let me know when you want to talk about it."

"Will do," George says, and he sounds like he wants to hang up, like he wants to be doing literally anything else right now, so Dream lets him go with no fight;

"I have to go to work now."

"Okay, have fun," George says, and Dream grimaces as he hangs up.

## Chapter End Notes

LEGIT yall have no idea how hard it was not to ever explicitly say that dream is like, super fucking in love with george. pls appreciate my struggle. it was so hard to keep it ambiguous

but also i feel like a lot of the time when you have a crush you dont spend much time thinking to yourself "i have a crush on this person" yanno? so it wasnt *too* bad, it was just tricky

hopefully this answered some of yalls questions abt the ambiguous bit in ch 2

i cant believe this whole chapter was one scene.

comment or i cry. also let me know which pov you read first uwu ty <3





# Just do it!

## Chapter Notes

no notes head empty

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Giving people time is hard. Dream has never been a very patient person, and waiting is a skill he's never really bothered to practice. He sucks at this. Day in, day out, it feels like all he does is wait for George to tell him he wants to keep talking about it. They still play minecraft in the meantime, but Dream doesn't call. They communicate through chat instead, and it's a little strange, because he's so used to hearing George's voice. And he misses it.

He wants to stop thinking about him, but it's harder now. Now that he knows.

A couple days into waiting, he finally gets a message on Discord from George that isn't about minecraft or their videos or anything like that.

*i cant do this*

Dream's heart leaps up into his throat. He asks what's going on, and George explains. Dream asks for time to think, but what he really needs is time to breathe. To calm down, and figure out his feelings. Because Dream knows he can spend as much time thinking as he wants, and he will never be able to decide.

.

He meant it when he said it makes sense, how George is feeling. Really, he did. But he's still confused. Because he doesn't see how either option will actually fix the problem, and he can think of other solutions, solutions he thinks are better. He messages George about it:

*what if we just turn off comments on every video*

Their popularity with the algorithm will take a hit, but when Dream weighs that against the cons of George's solutions, it seems like nothing.

*theres still twitter, dream  
and chat in streams*

Twitter can't really be helped, but Dream has mods on Twitch for a reason.

*we can have the mods delete shippy messages*

*dream, ive told you what the options are. ive told you what im okay with*

Which is just-- it's rude, is what it is. George didn't even acknowledge Dream's suggestion. Does this mean he's tired of talking about it? Is he just tolerating Dream right now?

Dream is trying to help, but it feels like he's just being annoying. He makes one last attempt.

*i can tell people to stop*

The typing indicator bubbles at him.

*youll start a fanwar if you do that  
people will think they have your support to reply to shippers with death threats or whatever*

And Dream knows that's true. That's why he only suggested it as a last resort. He has no idea what he's doing, how he's coming across right now. So he defaults to what he knows will work.

*george i really like playing minecraft with you*

It's true. Will it help?

*i never said you had to stop doing that*

Dream slams his fist down on his desk and presses his lips together, breathing through his nose. Why isn't anything working?

*but  
i dont know how you can expect me to decide between the foundation of our relationship and taking things further*

It feels like he's trying so hard to explain and consistently falling short. George doesn't seem to get it.

*we can still play minecraft together just not in videos*

So Dream gives up.

*i cant make this decision, george  
what would you rather do*

*i dont know  
i honestly dont*

If George doesn't know either, how could he expect Dream to make that choice?

*i want to date you  
but i love doing videos with you  
its effortless with you  
editing doesnt even feel like a chore  
its how i realised i wanted to be with you in the first place  
i was editing a video and usually i have to take breaks all the time just to get through it  
but i thought to myself "i could really just go on doing this forever"  
your the reason its fun, george*

*\*you're*

Dream blinks at his screen, and leans back in his chair. He's laughing, but it isn't funny. He unscrews the cap on his gatorade and takes a swig before responding, sort of wishing it was something stronger.

*im trying to be serious and youre correcting my grammar*

*sorry*

George probably just had no idea what to say. That doesn't make Dream feel better about any of it.

*i want to be with you, george. i really do. but without...*

*i dont know*

*this fucking sucks, george*

*like, you realise this is the worst?*

And he's angry.

*you dont have to choose now*

Because he doesn't know what he's supposed to choose. He doesn't know what he's doing, or what George is doing.

*george what do you even want out of this*

Does George even want to be with him? Maybe the only reason he tried to make Dream make this stupid choice in the first place was because he doesn't want to date. Maybe he expected Dream to just pick Youtube immediately.

*honestly?*

*honestly.*

Dream's discord chimes with a call.

"Hey."

"Hey, Dream," George says. Dream hears him sigh. "Look, I... I hate the way this started. I hate how it was a joke for so long. I just want to start over and fall in love the normal way. I want a regular relationship where no one is pointing at us and calling us adorable. I want us to be able to figure things out ourselves and I don't want you to stop flirting with me or giving me flowers."

Dream's heart leaps.

"Oh," he says. "I mean-- wait, really? I can-- it's okay if I flirt with you?"

George doesn't want him to stop. He-- he wants to *fall in love*. He wants everything to be serious. Dream wants that too, so badly he's buzzing with it.

"I mean, I don't know," George says, and Dream's breath catches like a butterfly fluttering directly into a spiderweb. "Not in videos or on stream, still."

"I can do that," Dream says.

"And I want to meet you in person. I need to talk about this face to face. I want to see you, Dream."

Dream blinks. That- that's *serious*, though. Wow.

If George wants to see him face to face, though, that means-- they'll have to plan. Dream will have to visit, or George will, and that'll take ages to organise. If he could just-- if Dream could just-- it would be so much *easier*.

"I really wish I could offer to video call, but--" Dream cuts himself off, looking down, ashamed. He doesn't know why it feels so different with George. Even with Sam, he wasn't this shy.

"No, it's okay," George says, and Dream feels his cheeks heating up. There's something softer about George's voice, and sweeter too, like toffee melting in the glove box of a car. "You don't have to do that. I don't want to try and have a serious talk in a situation that would just make you feel awkward."

"Still," he says. He's probably bright red right now. "I just kinda wish I wasn't so, yknow, camera shy, or whatever."

But it would mean George didn't make him feel so different all the time, so actually, Dream doesn't wish that at all.

"How would you feel about meeting up?" George asks, and Dream raises his eyebrows as he considers it.

Like, what's the point, really? Yeah, sure, cuddling and stuff is cool, but Dream knows he can't do anything but take this slow. He doesn't normally care about how fast things go, but for some reason, everything is different with George.

"I wouldn't be opposed," he decides. "I mean, I don't really see how it's that much different from calling?"

"It's different because I miss you. I mean, I know we talk all the time, but it feels like you're someone who's supposed to be part of my life," George says, and Dream swallows. His heart is beating so hard he can feel it in his chest. "But you aren't physically here and it *hurts*, Dream."

"Oh," Dream says. Again he feels the gaping distance between them. But this time, he knows George wants to cross it. "I didn't know you felt that way."

*/tpa GeorgeNotFound*

If only.

"Is that too much?" George asks.

"No, definitely not," Dream says. "Honestly, when you put it that way, it legitimately pains me that I can't teleport."

"What, just for me?"

"Who else?"

"Actually," George says, "since you say that... Are you Polly?"

"What? No, I'm Dream. Who's Polly?"

"No, are you polyamorous?"

Dream frowns. Polymer? Is George trying to ask whether he's made of plastic?

"What is that?"

"It's..." George pauses for a moment. "Okay, there's an easy way to explain but you're going to assume it's bad at first, but it's not bad, so just keep listening for the rest of the explanation."

"Okay?" Dream says, jiggling his leg. George sounds so anxious suddenly, and it's making Dream even more anxious to find out what he's even talking about. "Just explain, or I'll google it."

"It's like, loving more than one person." Ha, Dream knows all about *that*. "And dating more than one person," so cheating-- "but like, not lying about it," cheating *openly*-- "and only if they're all okay with it."

...Is that cheating? George clearly doesn't think so, given the whole speech he recited before he explained.

"Oh," Dream says. He's trying to figure out if that's okay or not, or if it's bad. "People do that?"

"I mean, yeah," George says.

If relationships are like board games, maybe polyamory is like playing with house rules. Not cheating, just different. Unique.

Maybe even more comfortable for everyone involved, depending on what they prefer.

Dream grew up playing Uno differently from everyone else he's ever met outside his immediate family, so he can understand that concept.

"And it works?"

"Yeah," George says. Dream wonders how he knows. He pictures George dating someone else and the anger is reflexive, because he wants to be enough on his own and he's actually been terrified for ages of the day someone else falls in love with George and steals him away. Because honestly, who wouldn't fall in love with George?

What if it was someone Dream liked as well, though? He doesn't think he could stand to see George with someone else on the side so soon after his last relationship, but if it weren't a side thing, if both of them were just as committed to a third person as they were to each other... "You have to communicate really well, though."

"Fuck, I *suck* at that," Dream says. And that's when he realises he relates quite strongly to everything George is saying. Wants it, even. He panics a little bit, and tries to backtrack. "Wait, why do you think I'm-- why are you asking?"

"The other day you said you still loved Sam at the same time you liked me."

Dream flinches, and shuts his eyes tight. His hands are clenched into fists. He opens them and takes a deep breath.

"But- but that's normal, isn't it? Like, everyone has casual crushes. Even if they have a partner already."

"Am I a casual crush?" George asks, and Dream shakes his head as he answers.

"I mean, no, definitely not. I just-- do other people stop getting crushes when they're in love? As in, like, serious crushes--" A house on stilts with a cute little window and a porch with a light. The foundations are sturdy. Construction finished so long ago that the grass in front is perfect now. And it's been here forever. "Oh," Dream says, because he's realised something momentous. "Oh no, George? George, I don't-- I don't even know if it's a crush, I think I literally fell in love with you but I still called it a crush because I fell in love with Sam first but--" he's thinking out loud, but he isn't alone. George is on the other end, listening, and Dream has just told him-- "Oh fuck. Wait. Wait, half of that was supposed to stay in my brain."

George chuckles, and Dream winces, because he doesn't know what laughing *means*.

"Don't worry about it," George says. "You-- well, you somehow aren't the only one."

Panic jolts at the base of Dream's spine. He knew it. He's been anticipating it for months.

"There's other people in love with you?" He says, trying not to sound as scared as he is. "Who, I need to tell them they're right."

George snorts.

"No, you idiot, I mean-- I mean that I--"

"There's not?" Dream says. That sounds too good to be true. There's no way, no way in hell that Dream is the only one who's noticed how wonderful and amazing George is. "George, that's ridiculous, because I'm pretty sure it's impossible to know you and not fall in love with you. I should know, I tried."

"You tried?" George says.

"I thought I could only have one, I didn't know polly pocketry or whatever was even a thing!" And-- "Wait, does that mean that if I talk to Sam--"

"She still lied to you," George says, but Dream is already obsessing over the idea. He can tell her-- he can say that it's fine if-- but no, George is right, because if polyamory works, then the reason he and Sam didn't work isn't because she had multiple guys. It's because she lied about it and never asked for consent. "And it's polyamory."

"You're right," Dream says. "I just-- I feel like-- I want there to be a way, but there's not, is there. There isn't a way, and I need to let her go."

If Sam wanted a healthy, respectful polyamorous relationship, they would have had one. All that could come of Dream reaching back out is getting used again. He doesn't think he can ever forget the lies, and even if he still loves her, he'll never be over the way she hurt him. He'll never be able to forgive that.

The best he can hope for is to move on.

"Right," George says.

And now Dream is thinking about Sam, like an idiot.

"Can I tell you something?" he asks. He's been sitting on this secret for a while, and it's making his back ache.

"Sure," George says. Dream takes a deep breath and shuts his eyes, afraid of the reaction he'll get.

"I wanted to cheat," he confesses. "I wanted to be with you the whole time. I really just-- I wanted to cheat on her. With you."

"Oh," George says, and Dream swallows with some difficulty. It's like swallowing buckshot, like dumping it into a cup and gulping it down. His stomach feels heavier after.

"Does-- does that make me a bad person?" he asks, wrapping his arms around himself to hold on, because this is one of the scariest things he's done in a long time. "Doesn't it mean I deserved-- do I have any right to be mad at her and break up with her for it?"

"What?" George says. "No, it doesn't make you a bad person, Dream. You didn't cheat. Wanting

isn't doing. This isn't-- it wasn't okay, she shouldn't have cheated on you."

"I'm not even that mad about it," Dream says, remembering how badly he wanted something with George back then. "Not really, I mean, I get it. You fall in love with two people and you have to choose because you can only have one... it's so tempting to just... not choose. I get why she did it."

George scoffs.

"She should have told you," he says, and Dream is surprised by how simple George can make this. It's so much more complicated in his head. "If we do decide to date, please promise you'll tell me if you like someone else too, Dream. I'm not sure if I'm poly or not, but I still want to know, so we can figure it out together."

Wow, what? Why would George do that to himself, though? Seeing Sam post about whichever gullible fratboy she's with now killed Dream daily before he gave up on ever feeling better about it and blocked her on Snapchat.

"Oh," Dream says. "Okay. I- yes, I will. You really want to know?"

"Of course I do," George says.

Again, how does George see it so simply? How can he say *of course*? The only reason Dream can imagine mentioning it if George hadn't asked is if he thought George liked the same person as well. And George just wants to know either way? No matter what?

It just doesn't make sense. Why would George want to make himself angry like that?

"Sam would get mad when I talked about you," Dream says. "She said she was tired of hearing about how great you are. But I didn't even talk about you that much. I don't get it. I don't get why you would want to hear about anyone else, and I don't get why she got so mad when she had someone else too the whole time."

Dream spent so long feeling guilty for liking another person. The amount of times he apologised for mentioning George-- he couldn't even guess.

"You didn't even really have me," George says softly. "She was the only one who had anyone else-- anyway, I want to hear about it because I just don't want you to feel like you have to make it a joke so you don't get mad. You shouldn't have to avoid getting mad in the first place. I just want you to talk to me."

"I talk to you all the time."

"About your feelings, Dream."

"Yeah, I know."

"And... Can we meet? In person, for real?"

Dream swallows, and sighs softly as some of the tension leaves his shoulders. He needed that. He needed the reminder that George wants to be with him.

"Okay," he says. "Yeah, I'd like that."

"I'll talk to you later, then?"

"Oh, uh-- yes. TTYL."



"Idiot."

Dream starts laughing as George ends the call.

Well. Time to google a whole lot of stuff.

#### Chapter End Notes

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